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Preaching and the Power of Music:

A Dialogue between the Pulpit and Choir Loft in 1689

Markus Rathey

The Collaboration between Preacher and Cantor

On December 26, 1689, the Second Day of Christmas, the congregants in Leipzig's St. Thomas Church witnessed the first performance of a new composition. It was exactly 45 years before Johann Sebastian Bach would premiere the second part of his *Christmas Oratorio*. In 1689, the composer was Johann Schelle (1648–1701). He was cantor at the St. Thomas Church and known as a skilled composer of vocal music. While only a small number of his works have survived,¹ he remains one of the most interesting characters in the history of Lutheran church music in the later decades of the seventeenth century.

The new work Schelle had composed for the Second Day of Christmas 1689 was a chorale cantata based on Martin Luther's Christmas hymn *Vom Himmel kam der Engel Schar* (From heaven the angel troop came near),² The cantata sets each stanza of the hymn in a separate movement, without adding extra texts like free poetry or biblical verses. This type of chorale cantata is called *per omnes versus* (through all verses). What is remarkable, however, is not only this individual piece but the context in which it was written.

During the ecclesiastical year 1689–90, Schelle composed cantatas *per omnes versus* for each Sunday and feast day. Schelle's cantata cycle is an early predecessor to Bach's chorale cantata cycle from 1724–25. However, while Bach's cantatas present most of the chorale stanzas in free paraphrases (which turn the hymn texts into recitatives and arias), Schelle exclusively used the original hymn texts, with the hymns' respective melodies appearing in each of the movements. Schelle's project is impressive if we look at the sheer numbers: within one year, this cantor at St. Thomas composed about 60 cantatas, each one having several movements. Even if Schelle occasionally reused chorale cantatas from earlier years, it still stands as a remarkable accomplishment. Unfortunately, only three of the cantatas for the cycle have survived; 15 more can be found in Leipzig inventories from the early eighteenth century.³ The three following cantatas have come down to us:

¹ See Johann Schelle, *Six Chorale Cantatas*, ed. Mary S. Morris (Recent Researches in the Music of the Baroque Era LX and LXI) (Madison: A-R Editions, 1988).

² The English translation of the hymn text is based on *Luther's Works*, vol.53: *Liturgy and Hymns*, ed. Ulrich S. Leupold (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1965), 307.

³ For a bibliographical overview of Schelle's chorale cantatas, see Markus Rathey, "Schelle, Carpzov und die Tradition der Choralkantate in Leipzig," *Jahrbuch 2011 des Staatlichen Instituts für Musikforschung*, 185–210; and Rathey, "The Chorale Cantata in Leipzig: The Collaboration between Schelle and Carpzov in 1689–1690 and Bach's Chorale Cantata Cycle," *Bach: Journal of the Riemenschneider Bach Institute* 43 (2012): 46–92.

Occasion	Schelle's Composition
2 nd Day of Christmas	<i>Vom Himmel kam der Engel Schar</i> . ⁴
Quasimodogeniti	<i>Ach Gott und Herr wie groß und schwer</i> ⁵
17 th Sunday after Trinity	<i>In dich hab ich gehoffet Herr</i> ⁶

What renders Schelle's cantatas particularly interesting for a historical inquiry is the composer's motivation for creating the cycle. One year before, in 1688–89, the Leipzig pastor and theologian Johann Benedict Carpzov (1639–99) had preached a cycle of hymn-sermons, expounding on one hymn in each of his sermons between Advent I 1688 and the last Sunday after Trinity 1689. During this cycle the idea was born that Schelle could set these hymns to music for the following year. Carpzov would then repeat the main ideas from his hymn-sermons from the previous year briefly in the introductions for his sermons, immediately following the settings by Schelle. Carpzov writes:

Welches der berühmte *Musicus* Herr Johann Schelle/ wohlverordneter *Director Chori Musici* unserer Leipziger Kirchen/ andächtigen Zuhörern desto lieblicher und begieriger zu hören machen wird/ indem er iedwedes lied in eine anmuthige music zubringen/ und solche vor der Predigt/ ehe der Christliche Glaube gesungen wird . . . hören zulassen/ gantz willig sich erboten. Gottesfürchtige Seelen werden voll Geistes werden/ und unter einander reden von psalmen/ und lobgesängen/ und geistlichen Liedern.⁷

Which [the hymns] the well-known musician Johann Schelle, appointed music director at our churches in Leipzig, will bring to hear in an even more pleasant way and in a way that will make the listeners long for it, by setting every hymn into a pleasant music, which is to be performed before the sermon, before the Creed is sung. . . . Devout souls will be filled with the Holy Spirit and they will talk to each other in psalms and hymns, and sacred songs.

The collaboration between Schelle and Carpzov represents one of the rare cases in which we have both the musical sources and the sermons for the same occasion. Since Schelle's cantatas were written a year after Carpzov's hymn-sermons, the composer was informed about the main theological ideas the preacher had expounded on and had even heard Carpzov's views on particular stanzas. Furthermore, Carpzov published a small booklet in 1689 containing the biblical texts, hymns, and some keywords summarizing the central ideas of his homilies. As the preface states, the little tract was printed to enable the listeners to prepare at home for the sermon and to recall the exegesis they had heard the previous year. Carpzov suggests:

⁴ Friedhelm Krummacher, *Die Überlieferung der Choralbearbeitungen in der frühen evangelischen Kantate. Untersuchungen zum Handschriftenrepertoire evangelischer Figuralmusik im späten 17. und beginnenden 18. Jahrhundert*, Berliner Studien zur Musikwissenschaft 10 (Berlin: Merseburger, 1965), 550.

⁵ Krummacher, *Die Überlieferung*, 548.

⁶ Krummacher, *Die Überlieferung*, 550.

⁷ Johann Benedict Carpzov, *Kurtz Verzeichniß derer Anno 1689. von D. Johann Benedict Carpzov/ in Leipzig gehaltenen Lehr- und Lieder-Predigten . . .* (Leipzig, 1689), 12–13.

Denen wir mit diesem Verzeichnis dienen/ damit sie iederzeit/ ehe sie sich noch in der Kirchen einfinden/ einen vorschmack dessen/ was sie darinnen zugewarten/ zuvor haben/ und sich darauf zu hauß wohl bereiten und schicken können.⁸

The congregation will find this booklet useful. The members can, even before they go to church, get a foretaste of what they can expect in the sermon and prepare themselves at home.

While the booklet was intended to be used by the congregation, we can be certain that Cantor Schelle consulted it for the preparation of his music as well. His chorale cantatas would replace the more extensive hymn-sermons from the previous year, and, like the booklet itself, the music served as a reminder of these hymn interpretations:

Damit auch bey diesem vorhaben der Evangelische text nicht übergangen werde/ ist mein vorhaben/ dessen kurtze *paraphrasin* eingangs weise/ an statt des vorm jahr erkläreten Liedes anzustellen/ das lied selbst aber bey erstem antritt noch vor verlesung des textes nach seinen inhalt und eintheilung auffß aller kürztzeste zu wiederholen.⁹

I am going to paraphrase the gospel text briefly in the introduction of the sermon—at the very place where I used to explain the hymn in the previous year. The hymn will be explained briefly at the beginning of the sermon, before the recitation of the gospel text.

The sermons were not published during Carpzov's or Schelle's lifetime. Carpzov died in 1699 and Schelle only two years later. However, the texts were preserved and in 1706 they finally appeared in print. The constellation of sources is exceptional: we are informed about the motivation for the composition and the function of the pieces within the liturgy; we even have access to the sermons Schelle would have heard before he composed his chorale cantatas.

The sermon for the Second Day of Christmas and Schelle's composition for the day provide a good case study for the relationship between sermon and cantata. I will first outline Carpzov's sermon and the way he interpreted the hymn; then I will demonstrate how the sermon is related to the chorale cantata by Schelle.

Johann Benedict Carpzov's Hymn-Sermon

It is almost impossible to overestimate the importance of hymns and hymn singing for the Lutheran Reformation and for Lutheran devotional piety in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Hymns were used for catechization and propaganda, in the liturgy and for personal devotion; they sounded in the public sphere as well as in the privacy of the home. Theologians in the Lutheran tradition had called the hymn book the "small Bible," thus emphasizing that the hymns were a summary of the biblical message. The importance of hymns and hymn singing explains the emergence of the genre of the "hymn-sermon" in the Lutheran tradition, already present in the sixteenth century. In 1581 the Lutheran theologian Cyriacus Spangenberg (1528–1604) published a collection of hymn-sermons with the title *Cithara Lutheri*. Numerous other

⁸ Carpzov, *Kurtz Verzeichniß*, 13.

⁹ Carpzov, *Kurtz Verzeichniß*, 11–12.

collections by preachers followed throughout the seventeenth century, making the hymn-sermon one of the most popular forms of devotional literature.¹⁰

The term “hymn-sermon” can be a bit misleading. Most of the sermons only interpreted the hymn in the introduction, or *exordium*, while the main body of the sermon still focused on the gospel text for the particular day. This is also the case with Carpzov’s sermons. However, Baroque sermons were long (about one hour), and even an introduction afforded a preacher ample time to analyze and interpret a hymn. To take our example: the whole sermon for the Second Day of Christmas is 51 pages long; 15 of these pages are devoted to the interpretation of the Christmas hymn *Vom Himmel kam der Engel Schar*.

The Second Day of Christmas had a dual character, which is reflected in the two gospel readings that are listed in traditional lectionaries. The day could be celebrated as the second day of the Christmas feast, in which case the gospel text would have been Luke 2:15–20, the continuation of the Christmas story, narrating the departure of the shepherds for the manger and their encounter with Mary, Joseph, and the child. But December 26 was also St. Stephen’s Day, commemorating the death of the first martyr of the Christian church. The prescribed gospel text for that day was Matthew 23:34–39 (Jesus’s lament “Jerusalem, you kill your prophets”).

Carpzov, for his sermon on December 26, 1688, chose the St. Stephen text and drew a connection to the topic of the Christmas feast in the *exordium* by interpreting the six stanzas of Luther’s Christmas hymn. The preacher had to bridge the gulf between the joyful occasion of the Christmas feast (which is also expressed in the text of the hymn) and the more somber character of the martyr’s feast day. Carpzov quite elegantly accomplishes this feat by referring back to the sermon from the previous day, which had focused on another Lutheran Christmas chorale, *Gelobet seist du, Jesu Christ* (All praise to Thee, O Jesus Christ).¹¹ Each stanza of that hymn ends with the acclamation “Kyrieleis” (Lord, have mercy). The preacher interprets this acclamation as a cry for God’s mercy and relates it to the desperation the martyr Stephen must have felt in the hour of his death. Carpzov points out that this was the same fear every Christian felt (in a real or metaphorical sense) in the hour of their tribulations:

Gestern höreten wir zwar in ndern predigten von lauter freude; der Engel sagte zu uns: freuet euch . . . Allein/ heute will uns das evangelium vielmehr zu trauren und weinen bringen/ weil darinnen des tödtens/ geisselns. creitzigens und verfolgens gedacht wird. So gehet es in dem reich Christi daher/ die treuen reichs-genossen müssen sie viel ausstehen/ sie sind allenthalben in trübsal/ auswendig streit/ und inwendig furcht. 2. Cor. VII, 5. und derohalben muß das Kyrieleison von denselben nicht vergessen/ sondern fleissig angestimmt werden.¹²

¹⁰ For a history of the hymn-sermon genre, see Martin Rössler, *Die Liedpredigt. Geschichte einer Predigtgattung* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1976); and Rössler, *Bibliographie der deutschen Liedpredigt* (Nieuwkoop: De Graaf, 1976). Also see Barbara Pitkin’s discussion of the *sermo modernus* in her article, “The Reformation of Preaching: Transformations of Worship Soundscapes in Early Modern Germany and Switzerland,” *Yale Journal of Music & Religion* 1.2 (2015): 5–20.

¹¹ For an English translation, see *Luther’s Works* 53, 240–41.

¹² Johann Benedict Carpzov, *Lehr- und Lieder-Predigten, von der zahl LXXIV. gehalten an Sonn-Fest- und Buß-Tagen Anno 1689 drinnen jederzeit im Eingange ein gut Lutherisch Lied richtig eingetheilet und erklärt und hernach ein gewisser Glaubens-Articul nach Gelegenheit des Testes gründlich und auff’s einfältigste abgehandelt*

Yesterday we heard in our sermon about the joy when the angel announced: Be joyful . . . Alas, today the gospel wants to make us sad and bring us to tears, because it talks about killing, torturing, crucifying, and persecution. This is what the kingdom of Christ looks like: the followers of Christ have to endure much; they have to live in distress and fight constantly, and have to fear much (2 Cor 7:5). . . . Therefore, we must not forget the Kyrie eleison from the hymn we sang yesterday, but sing it rather often.

The joy of Christmas and the outcry of the broken world belong together, as do cross and manger. In fact, Carpzov deems it necessary to remember the torture and suffering Christians have to endure, particularly on the very day the redeemer of the world was born. Carpzov reminds his listeners of Luther's tribulations and suffering and uses this biographical note to justify his choice of the hymn *Vom Himmel kam der Engel Schar* for this particular day. He explains that

nachdem es von dem seligen mann in den letzten zeiten seines lebens verfertigt worden/ da er so wohl sehr viel verfolgung gesehen/ als auch für seine person selbst ausgestanden/ dabey er sich aber die geburt Jesu Christi sehr wohl zu nutzen gemacht/ auch andere damit auffgerichtet.¹³

it was written by this blessed man in the last years of his life, after he had seen much persecution and endured it himself. However, he gained strength from Jesus Christ's birth and also helped others by reminding them of it.

The hymn was indeed written rather late in Luther's life and appeared for the first time in a Wittenberg hymnal in 1543.¹⁴ Carpzov's choice was also motivated by the fact that this Christmas hymn—more so than others—talks about the “powers that are against God and men.” A modern interpreter of the hymn text points out: “It is the motive of the apocalyptic battle that is fought by God in Christ and in his World on behalf of men until today. . . . This brings the hymn actually closer to others like *Nun freut euch* [Dear Christians, let us now rejoice] or *Ein feste Burg* [A mighty fortress] than his other Christmas songs.”¹⁵ Thus, this hymn was the ideal connection between Christmas and somber subjects like martyrdom and persecution.

Carpzov structures his hymn-sermon into three sections, differentiating between “Weihnachtslehre” (Christmas doctrine), “Weihnachtstrost” (Christmas consolation), and “Weihnachtsermahnung” (Christmas admonition). Carpzov's three categories resemble the medieval hermeneutic of the multiple senses of scripture. These are now applied to the exegesis of a hymn. The *Christmas doctrine* is explained in the interpretation of the first three stanzas, the *consolation* in the explanation of stanzas 4 and 5, and the final stanza is used by Carpzov to

wird; Dem letztlich der Gebrauch zur Widerlegung, Ermahnung und Trost beygefüget ist, Daß man also in denselben der einzigen Lutherischen Lieder rechten Verstand, und am gut teutsch Systema Theologiae (Leipzig, 1706), 281.

¹³ Carpzov, *Lehr- und Lieder-Predigten*, 283.

¹⁴ *Luther's Works* 53, 307.

¹⁵ Gerhard Hahn, *Evangelium als literarische Anweisung. Zu Luthers Stellung in der Geschichte des deutschen kirchlichen Liedes*, Münchener Texte und Untersuchungen zur Deutschen Literatur des Mittelalters 73 (Munich: Artemis, 1981), 145: “Es ist das Motiv des heilsgeschichtlichen Kampfes, den Gott in Christus und mit seinem Wort um den Menschen bis zur Gegenwart führt . . . Damit tritt dieses Lied tatsächlich eher an die Seite von *Nun freut euch* . . . oder auch von *Ein feste Burg* als an die der übrigen Weihnachtslieder.”

admonish his listeners (and readers). Within these three categories, Carpzov does not strictly follow the order of the stanzas but rather incorporates lines of the hymn into a free exegesis.

Stanza	English translation	Carpzov's categories
1) Vom Himmel kam der Engel Schar, Erschien den Hirten offenbar; Sie sagten ihn: "Ein Kindlein zart, Das liegt dort in der Krippen hart.	From heaven the angel troop came near, And to the shepherds plain appear: A tender little child, they cry, In a rough manger lies hard by.	Weihnachtslehre (Christmas doctrine)
2) Zu Bethlehem, in Davids Stadt, Wie Micha das verkündet hat, Es ist der Herre Jesus Christ, Der euer aller Heiland ist.	In Bethlehem, David's town of old, As Prophet Micah has foretold; 'Tis the Lord Jesus Christ, I wis, Who of you all the Savior is.	
3) Des sollt ihr alle fröhlich sein, Daß Gott mit euch ist worden ein. Er ist geboren eu'r Fleisch und Blut, Eu'r Bruder ist das ewig Gut.	And ye may well break out in mirth, That God in one with you henceforth; For He is born your flesh and blood— Your brother is the eternal Good.	
4) Was kann euch tun die Sünd und Tod? Ihr habt mit euch den wahren Gott; Laßt zürnen Teufel und die Höll, Gottes Sohn ist worden eu'r Gesell.	What can death do to you, or sin? The true God is to you come in. Let hell and Satan raging go— The Son of God's your comrade now.	Weihnachtstrost (Christmas consolation)
5) Er will und kann euch lassen nicht, Setzt ihr auf ihn eu'r Zuversicht; Es mögen euch viel fechten an: Dem sei Trotz, der's nicht lassen kann.	He will nor can from you go hence; Set you in Him your confidence. Let many battle on you make, Defy Him—He cannot forsake.	
6) Zuletzt müßt ihr doch haben recht, Ihr seid nun worden Gott's Geschlecht. Des danket Gott in Ewigkeit, Geduldig, fröhlich allezeit. Amen	At last you must approval win, For you are now of God's own kin, For this thank God, ever and aye, Patient and joyful all the day. Amen.	Weihnachts- ermahnung (Christmas admonition)

A central point in Carpzov's Christmas doctrine is the dichotomy between the divine and human natures of Christ. While incomprehensible to the human mind, God had decided to reveal Himself in poverty and in a small child. The manger is, according to Carpzov, the external sign of Christ's humiliation, which, in turn, is the precondition for salvation:

Singen wir aber zuerst/ daß der Engel gesaget: Ein kindlein zart/ das liegt dort in der krippen hart/ so stellen wir uns hiermit den stand der erniedrung dieses HErrn für/ und verwundern uns/ daß er so gar geringe und armselig diese welt betreten. Es machet schon grosses nachdencken/ daß GOtt/ da er mensch worden/ eben wie anere menschen gebohren worden/ und wie die kinder klein und zart von der Mutter gebohren werden Solches verwundern aber wird vermehret/ wenn man betrachtet/ daß/ da er so ein grosser HErr/ den alle welt ehren soll/ er dennoch in eine krippen/ aus welcher das unvernünftige vieh sein futter frißt/ sich legen lasset/ und nicht solche wiegen oder windeln hat.¹⁶

If we sing at the beginning that that angel has said, "A tender little child, they cry, in a rough manger lies hard by," we imagine the Lord's status of humiliation and we are surprised that He has entered the world in humility and poverty. It urges us to wonder that God, when He became man in the same way as other people are born, as small and tender children, and are given birth by a mother

¹⁶ Carpzov, *Lehr- und Lieder-Predigten*, 287.

Our amazement is even increased if we consider that He—even though He is a great Lord who should be honored by the whole world—does not lie in a cradle but lets Himself be laid into a manger from which the unwitting livestock eats their food.

The second section of the sermon, explaining the Christmas consolation, explores the promise of the hymn that Christ was with the faithful in all tribulations and that He was the guardian against devil, death, and hell. Carpzov emphasizes in particular the dialectical relationship between the adversaries and Christ. Here, the celebration of St. Stephen's Day comes into play: as Stephen had been persecuted by his (and Christ's) enemies, every Christian has to face her own enemies and can still trust in divine support:

Ein wohlgegründeter trotz hergegen ist bey den frommen und heiligen zu finden/ als welche trotzen auff den GOt Israel/ welcher heisset der HErr Zebaoth/ *Jesa.* XLVIII, 2. und dessen wege ein trotz sind/ *Prov.* X, 29. Mit einem solchen trotz treibet ein mensch/ der die rechte weisheit und das gesetz GOTTes erlernet/ alle furcht und schrecken von sich. . . . Damit nun unser trotz und muth wider die feinde wohlgegründet sey/ werden wir auff Christum als unsern beystand gewiesen.¹⁷

A well-founded defiance can be found among the pious and holy, who trust in the God of Israel, who is called the Lord Zebaoth, Isaiah 48:2, and whose ways are the ways of defiance, Proverbs 10:29. It is with this kind of defiance that a man, who has both acquired wisdom and who has learned the laws of God, will drive away all fear and terror. . . . If our defiance and courage against the enemies shall have a solid foundation, is has to be grounded in the [trust in the] support of Jesus.

In his interpretation of the final stanza of the chorale, Carpzov uses the words of the hymn to admonish his listeners:

6) Zuletzt müßt ihr doch haben recht,
Ihr seid nun worden Gotts Geschlecht.
Des danket Gott in Ewigkeit,
Geduldig, fröhlich allezeit.

At last you must approval win,
For you are now of God's own kin,
For this thank God, ever and aye,
Patient and joyful all the day. Amen.

God deserves thanks for the salvation of humanity, and faithful believers are expected (and encouraged) to be patient in all tribulations and persecutions. The worthy reward is joy and certainty of salvation. Carpzov explains:

Und wie wir wegen des gegenwärtigen übels geduld erweisen/ also müssen wir in ansehung der künftigen herrlichkeit frölich und gutes muthes seyn/ damit wir also das/ was Paulus von uns fordert/ Seyd frölich in hoffnung/ geduldig in trübsal/ *Rom.* XII, 12. in acht nehmen. So wenig der worte geduldig/ frölich allezeit/ so voll krafft sind sie; und so mit denselben wohl ehe ein *medicus* einen *melancholicum*, der die music verstanden/ indem er sie denselben erst langsam/ hernach geschwinde singen lehren/ durch göttliche krafft glücklich curirt/ so sollen wir auch mit denselben den trauer-geist vertreiben/ und uns in allerley noth auffrichten.¹⁸

¹⁷ Carpzov, *Lehr- und Lieder-Predigten*, 292–93.

¹⁸ Carpzov, *Lehr- und Lieder-Predigten*, 296.

In the same way as we are patient in the distress we have to endure now, we can be joyful and full of hope expecting the future glory, as Paul admonishes us (Rom 12:12). Even though the words “patient” and “joyful” might be small, they are also very powerful. It is as if a *medicus* [doctor] wants to heal a *melancholicus* [melancholic person] who understands music: he teaches him to sing, first slowly and then faster. And this way God’s power will cure him. In the same way the words in the hymn will drive out the spirit of distress and lift us up.

The healing power, to which Carpzov alludes here, reflects the classical and medieval view of music as a force that is able to affect the human body by changing the harmony and balance of the “humors” (the bodily fluid of Galenic medicine). Luther himself referred repeatedly to this view, and it was still an integral part of a Lutheran theology of music in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The Leipzig organist Daniel Vetter wrote in a similar vein in a preface to a volume of chorale settings in 1709:

Es ist eine geistliche Ergötzlichkeit/ welche ich vor dessen gütige Augen geziemend lege. So weit nun eine innerliche Vergnügung des Gemüths den äußerlich-sinnlichen Freuden vorzuziehen; so weit edler ist dieselbige sonder zweiffel zu schätzen/ wenn sie eine geistliche Übung zum Grunde hat. Und wer wolte nicht diesen Titel willigst erbaulichen Gesängen gönnen? . . . Wer wolte es nicht vor eine preißwürdige Ergötzlichkeit *passiren* lassen/ wofern durch eine anmuthige Art die Empfindung des menschlichen Hertzens weit mächtiger gemacht/ und diejenige heilige *affecten*/ so mit ihnen nothwendig verknüpft seyn müssen/ mit einer grösseren Zärtligkeit *moviret* werden?¹⁹

It is a spiritual delight, which I lay in front of your merciful eyes. Insofar as an inner delight is preferable over external, sensual joy, insofar it is also preferable, when this is based on a spiritual exercise. And who wouldn’t want to begrudge this title these edifying songs? . . . Who would not want to concede that it is an honorable delight, when in a pleasing way, the senses of the human heart are strengthened and the sacred affects, which are necessarily connected with them, are moved with a higher degree of tenderness?

Music, according to Carpzov and contemporary music theory, was able to move the heart and steer the human affections. This becomes manifest in the movements of Schelle’s chorale cantata, to which we will now turn.

Echoes in Johann Schelle’s Chorale Cantata

Schelle’s chorale cantata *Vom Himmel kam der Engel Schar* is transmitted in a score copy in the Bokemeyer Collection, an important northern German collection of seventeenth-century music. The large instrumental and vocal forces required for this cantata reflect the festive character of the occasion: 2 clarini, timpani, 2 cornetti, 2 trombones, 2 violins, 2 violas, basso continuo, and a five-voice vocal ensemble (Cantus 1 and 2, Altus, Tenor, Bass). Schelle sets all six stanzas of Luther’s hymn:

¹⁹ Daniel Vetter, *Musicalische Kirch- und Hauß-Ergötzlichkeit/ Bestehend in denen gewöhnlichen Geistlichen Liedern/ so durchs gantze Jahr bey öffentlichen Gottes-Dienst gesungen werden/ auff eine gantz angenehme jedoch leichte Manier in Italienische Tabulatur gesetzt/ so/ daß allemahl der Choral eines jedweden Liedes auff der Orgel, nachgehends eine gebrochene Variation auff dem Spinett oder Clavicordio zu tractiren folget* . . . (Leipzig: Daniel Vetter, [1709]), Vorrede, C^f.

Stanza	1	2	3	4	5	6
Vocal forces	CCATB	C1 later tutti	CCATB	CCATB	T later tutti	CCATB
Instrumental forces	Tutti	VI 1+2, b.c., later tutti	B.c., alternating with tutti sections	Tutti	Cor 1+2, b.c., later tutti	Tutti
Meter	C	C	3/2	C	C	C

The cantata has a clear symmetric structure. The two framing movements and the solo movements 2 and 5 are almost identical. At the center of the piece stand movements 3 and 4, both of which feature the whole vocal ensemble, albeit with different instrumental accompaniments. The third movement is set apart by a change of meter and an extensive point of imitation, more closely resembling a traditional motet than a modern cantata movement. The fourth movement, on the other hand, is modern in character and uses the entire instrumental tutti right from the start. The structure of the cantata, with its symmetric ground plan, already shows that Schelle does not follow the structure suggested by Carpzov's sermon, which had grouped the hymn stanzas 3+2+1. Instead, in terms of structure, Schelle follows a purely musical blueprint.

The first movement of Schelle's cantata presents the hymn in a simple four-part setting, interrupted by fanfare-like instrumental interludes. Additionally, the first line of the hymn is sung by the soprano before the other voices enter. The trumpets and drums are primarily employed for the interludes between the lines, while the chorale is accompanied by the "quieter" instruments. The drums and the trumpet also do not play between the lines "Erschien den Hirten offenbar" and "Sie sagten ihn": 'Ein Kindlein zart' (And to the shepherds plain appear: A tender little child, they cry). Here the instrumentation clearly reflects the "tenderness" of the child in the manger. Only for the final line does Schelle bring back the loud instruments to lead the movement to a celebratory finale. A text interpretation along the lines of Carpzov's sermon does not occur.

Similarly, the following movement in Schelle's cantata reflects the affect of the text of the hymn without necessarily requiring the sermon as a source of inspiration. The composer begins his setting as a small-scale concerto for soprano and two violins. He does not add the entire ensemble, including trumpets, until later in the movement, when the hymn invokes Christ as the Lord ("Es ist der Herre Jesus Christ"—'Tis the Lord Jesus Christ). The relationship with Carpzov's sermon here is complicated. The preacher had elaborated extensively on the might and power of Christ the Lord; in that regard, Schelle underscores what the preacher had said. However, the composer does nothing here that was not motivated by the text itself. In other words, sermon and composition correlate in their views but are not necessarily interdependent.

The third movement of the chorale cantata formally resembles a traditional chorale motet. Every line of the hymn is presented in a point of imitation by the four voices and is then subsequently repeated in a homorhythmic setting. The choice of texture was motivated by Schelle's wish to create musical diversity; it does not have a semantic function.

The third movement ends the section Carpzov had labeled *Christmas doctrine*; the fourth and fifth movements, which now follow, contain the *Christmas consolation*. Schelle's setting, with its fanfare-like accompaniment and a melodically embellished vocal line, reflects the martial character of the text, which invokes the threat posed by death and sin and counters these with Christ's helping and comforting presence. The tumultuous and dramatic character of the upper voices contrasts sharply with the cantus firmus, sung calmly in long note values by the bass. Bass cantus firmi are rather uncommon in the central German repertoire from the seventeenth century, and Schelle's decision to assign the melody to the lowest voice in the texture is therefore noteworthy. Schelle's motivation to use this particular texture for this stanza is motivated by the text. The slow voice leading and the constant presence of the melody represent Christ's continuous presence in the midst of the tribulations (see Ex. 1, below).

128

Canto I
Laßt zür - nen, laßt zür - nen, laßt zür - nen

Canto II
Laßt zür - nen, laßt zür - nen, laßt zür - nen

Alto
Laßt zür - nen, laßt zür - nen, laßt zür - nen

Tenore
Laßt zür - nen

Basso
Laßt zür - nen

130

C. I
Teu-fel, laßt zür-nen Teu-fel und die Höll', laßt zür-nen

C. II
Teu-fel, laßt zür-nen Teu-fel und die Höll', laßt zür-nen

A.
Teu-fel, laßt zür-nen Teu-fel und die Höll', laßt zür-nen

T.
Teu - fel und die Höll'

B.
Teu - fel und die Höll'

Example 1. Johann Schelle, *Vom Himmel kam*, *Versus 4*, mm. 128-132 (vocal parts only)

The close relationship between text and texture becomes even clearer toward the end of the movement. The line “Laßt zürnen Teufel und die Höll, / Gottes Sohn ist worden eu’r Gesell” (Let hell and Satan raging go—The Son of God’s your comrade now) is presented in homorhythmic declamation. The juxtaposition of battle and calmness resolves into the confidence of Christ’s companionship.

Schelle’s dialectical juxtaposition between the two states of war and peace and their subsequent resolution correlate with Carpzov’s exegesis—however, again without necessarily requiring the sermon as a direct model:

So iemand siehet/ daß ein mächtiger feind sich wider ihn rüstet/ aber weiß/ daß er auff seiner seiten einen weit mächtigern bunds-genossen hat/ als jener ist/ so achtet er denselben nicht/ sondern denckt ihn leichte zu überwinden.²⁰

If someone sees that an enemy prepares for battle, but he knows that he has a much stronger ally than the enemy, he doesn’t care about the enemy but knows that he will defeat him easily.

For the fifth stanza, Schelle repeated the music of stanza 2. Similarly, the last stanza is mostly borrowed from the opening movement of the chorale cantata. While this creates cyclical coherence on a structural level, the literal repetition limits the composer in his interpretation of the text. Schelle abandons the earlier model only for the final line of the hymn and uses the contrast between the words “geduldig” (patient) and “fröhlich” (joyful) to contrast sections labeled *adagio* and *presto* (see Ex. 2, below).

The quite literal translation of the textual affect into music corresponds to the interpretation of Carpzov, who had in his sermon employed musical metaphors to describe the transition from patience to joy. This is the clearest connection between the sermon and the composition. Carpzov had written:

. . . ehe ein *medicus* einen *melancholicum*, der die music verstanden/ indem er sie denselben erst langsam/ hernach geschwinde singen lehren/ durch göttliche krafft glücklich curirt/ so sollen wir auch mit denselben den trauer-geist vertreiben/ und uns in allerley noth auffrichten.²¹

It is as if a *medicus* wants to heal a *melancholicus* who understands music: he teaches him to sing, first slowly and then faster. And this way God’s power will cure him. In the same way the words in the hymn will drive out the spirit of distress and lift us up.

Schelle’s music not only paints the text and translates the words into music but, if Carpzov is right, his musical setting would actively cause this transition from patience to joy in the listeners in Leipzig. This is more than just speculation. Early modern views on music had charged sounds with the ability actively to stir the emotions and affects of the listeners.²² Affects in music were

²⁰ Carpzov, *Lehr- und Lieder-Predigten*, 290.

²¹ Carpzov, *Lehr- und Lieder-Predigten*, 296.

²² See Gary Tomlinson, “Five Pictures of Pathos,” in *Reading the Early Modern Passions*, ed. Gail K. Paster et al. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 192–214.

seen not only as a “depiction” of real affects, but as their effective representations. Carpzov’s sermon alludes to this power of music—and Schelle realizes it in his composition.

adagio **presto** 205

Clarino I/II

Pauken

Canto I
ge - dul - dig, (ge - dul - dig,) fröh - lich, fröh - lich,

Canto II
ge - dul - dig, ge - dul - dig, fröh - lich, fröh lich, fröh - lich, fröh -

Alto
ge - dul - dig, ge - dul - dig, fröh - lich, fröh lich, fröh - lich, fröh - lich,

Tenore
ge - dul - dig, (ge - dul - dig,) fröh - lich, fröh - lich, fröh - lich,

Basso
ge - dul - dig, ge - dul - dig, fröh - lich, fröh - lich, fröh - lich, fröh -

adagio **presto**

Violino I/II

Cornetto I/II

Violetta I/II

Posaune I/II

B. c.

6 6 6 6

Example 2. Schelle, *Vom Himmel kam, Versus 6, mm. 203–205*

Dialogue between Equal Partners

This last example in particular suggests a connection between the sermons by Carpzov and Schelle’s cantatas that goes beyond the use of the same material. Not only do both men interpret the text of the hymn similarly, but both exhibit a similar understanding of music and its efficacy. The simple explanation would be that Schelle heard Carpzov’s sermon in 1688 and one year later wrote his piece along the same lines. However, the reality was probably more complex and multidirectional. Schelle had served at St. Thomas in Leipzig since 1677, and Carpzov had held several positions at the same church since 1671. In more than a decade of collaboration before

the composition of the chorale cantata cycle, the preacher and the composer had ample opportunities to exchange their views of music in general, and of specific hymns in particular. Therefore, the observation that the sermon and cantata highlight similar aspects of the hymn and complement one another in their interpretive function is more important than a direct influence.

The similarities and differences between Carpzov's and Schelle's interpretations of Luther's hymn bring into sharper relief the strengths and weaknesses of the two discourses, sermon and cantata—or, more generally, word and music. The sermon is discursive. It can explain complex theological problems and, by adding references to biblical and other texts, deepen the understanding of the hymn text. The sermon can also rearrange lines from the chorale (as Carpvov did), and by discussing them out of order it can integrate them into the rhetorical structure of the sermon. Such a rearrangement is unusual in a cantata, at least in a cantata *per omnes versus*. Even in cases where a composer changes the order of stanzas, he never presents individual lines out of order. The syntax of the chorale melody forbade that.

Carpzov's discussion of the hymn follows a linear, theological trajectory: doctrine – consolation – admonition. The structure of Schelle's cantata is symmetrical and circular. Schelle was also not able to include additional texts to interpret the chorale, which limited his interpretative spectrum. However, it would be wrong to view Schelle's interpretation as being inferior to Carpzov's sermon. Schelle's cantata was able to draw subtextual connections, like the use of a military idiom and instrumentation in the stanza that thematized the battle between good and evil. Sonic connotations and sonic images are the "texts" that the composer had at his disposal for his exegesis of the hymn. The affective efficacy of these devices is significantly stronger than a preacher could have accomplished in his sermon.

Furthermore, in the fourth stanza, Schelle juxtaposed God's support on the one hand and the threat posed by the adversaries hell and Satan on the other. The calming and peaceful nature of God's presence is signified by the slow pace of the bass cantus firmus while the "battle" still goes on in the upper voices. In other words, music is able to depict complexity and simultaneity of ideas, something a preacher is only able to do successively.

Toward the end of his interpretation, Carpzov finally refers to the power of music to steer the affects and influence the mood of the listener. While this correlates in an interesting way with Schelle's setting of the respective line from the chorale, it can also be read as a hermeneutic key to the entire collaboration between preacher and cantor during the chorale cantata cycle. The discursive limitations of music are more than outweighed by its affective efficacy. Music can inspire the transformation from melancholy to joy. It can turn anxious fear to calm. It can bring forth the memory of war and promise the prospect of divine peace. And it can trigger memories. It is these memories that Carpzov relied on when he agreed with his cantor on the chorale project in 1689-90. With the little printed tract in their hands and Schelle's music in their ears, the congregation in Leipzig was reminded of Carpzov's sermons from the previous year. Yet, the music is more than just a trigger for the listener's memory. It has, as Carpzov reminds in his sermon, its own God-given power.

